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USMISSION USUN
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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LIMDIS

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY DURING 1974: A DETENTE BALANCE SHEET

1. SUMMARY. TWO DRAMATIC EVENTS AT THE YEAR'S END-- THE DENOUEMENT OF THE MFN-CREDITS AFFAIR AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST-- HAVE PROVOKED UNEASINESS IN MOSCOW REGARDING THE FUTURE COURSE OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. TAKING 1974 AS WHOLE, HOWEVER. WE BELIEVE THAT IN SOVIET EYES THE PLUSES STILL OUTWEIGH THE MINUSES AND THAT THE LEADERSHIP IS STILL ANCHORED TO THE DETENTE POLICY IT ADOPTED AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH PARTY CONGRESS IN 1971 AND STILL COMMITTED TO MAKING IT "IRREVERSIBLE." HOWEVER, DETENTE HAS CLEARLY SUFFERED A SETBACK IN THE PAST MONTHS AND MOSCOW IS PREY TO DOUBTS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED FOR A STABLE DETENTE RELATIONSHIP--DOUBTS THAT, IF THEY GROW, COULD AFFECT THE USSR'S OWN COMMITMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. WHAT MOSCOW HAS HOPED TO GET OUT OF DETENTE CAN BE GROUPED INTO FOUR GENERAL CATEGORIES: (1) ACCEPTANCE BY THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES OF A NEW POLITICAL/MILITARY RELATION-SHIP WITH THE USSR BASED ON THE AVOIDANCE OF NUCLEAR CONFRONTA-TATION, ON STRATEGIC PARITY, AND ON RECOGNITION OF THE USSR AS A GREAT POWER WITH ALL THE ATTRIBUTES, INCLUDING THAT OF ARBITER IN MAJOR THIRD-WORLD AREAS; (2) A SOFTENING OF THE POLITICAL GROUND FOR EXPANSION OF SOVIET
INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE AND OF SOVIET-SUPPORTED INFLUENCES;
(3) THE POLITICAL ISOLATION OR NEUTRALIZATION OF CHINA; AND
--LAST BUT NOT LEAST-- (4) ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND FINANCING FROM CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES. IN ALL OF THESE CATEGORIES MOSCOW MADE SOME PROGRESS DURING 1974, ALTHOUGH IN NONE OF THEM WAS THE PROGRESS UNMIXED BY FAILURES, AND IN THE LAST THE SETBACK HAS BEEN SEVERE.
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3. MOSCOW MAY WELL LOOK ON THE VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING ON SALT AS ITS MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESS OF 1974. THE SOVIETS PAID A PRICE IN FBS, BUT IN EFFECT THEY PLUGGED THE MIRV GAP AND GAINED EVENTUAL NUMERICAL PARITY IN ONE OF THE QUALITATIVE AREAS IN WHICH THE U.S. WAS DEMONSTRABLY AHEAD. REGARDLESS OF PROGRESS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF DETENTE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIET DESIRE IS STRONG TO FINALIZE A

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SALT AGREEMENT ALONG THE LINES WORKED OUT IN VLADIVOSTOK.

4. THE SOVIETS DID NOT FARE AS WELL DURING 1974 IN WINNING THE POLITICAL PERQUISITES TO WHICH THEY FEEL THEY ARE ENTITLED BY THEIR STRATEGIC COEQUALITY AND DETENTE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. APART FROM THE DOMESTIC DANGERS FOR THEM POSED BY JACKSON-VANIK, THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRADE AND EX-IM BILLS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY HARDENED BY THE FACT THAT THEY RETAINED THE STIGMA OF POLITICAL AND MORAL PARIAH IN THE EYES OF CONGRESS. A SIMILAR IRRITATION IS AT THE HEART OF THEIR FRUSTRATION AT BEING KEPT OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS-- AS THEY SEE IT, A SITUATION INCOMMENSURATE BOTH WITH MOSCOW'S NEW STATUS AND WITH ITS IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN THE AREA. CONTINUED POSTPONEMENT OF GENEVA, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE EM-BARRASSING CANCELLATION OF THE BREZHNEV TRIP TO EGYPT, COULD RAISE QUESTIONS IN THE KREMLIN ABOUT THE CURRENT SOVIET POLICY OF COMPARATIVE RESTRAINT. WHILE SOVIET LEVERAGE (CONFINED PRIMARILY TO SOME INFLUENCE OVER SYRIA AND THE PLO) MAY BE MARGINAL, THEY MAY BE TEMPTED TO TRY TO SABOTAGE SERIOUS SETTLEMENT EFFORTS IF THEY DECIDE THAT THE U.S. IS DETERMINED TO EXCLUDE THEM INDEFINITELY.

5. IN THE SECOND CATEGORY--THE EXPANSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE--1974 WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR THE USSR, PARTICULARLY IN THE EAST-WEST CONTEXT. BREZHNEV'S RECORD-SETTING AMOUNT OF SUMMITRY--WITH NIXON AND FORD, POMPIDOU AND GISCARD, AND SCHMIDT--PROJECTED THE PICTURE OF A SOVIET UNION CLEARLY RECOGNIZED BY WESTERN LEADERS AS COUNTING FOR SOMETHING IN THE WORLD. WHILE DETENTE PLAYED NO DIRECT ROLE IN CAUSING THE POLITICAL CHANGES IN PORTUGAL AND GREECE, IT CERTAINLY FACILITATED WESTERN ACCEPTANCE OF THESE TURNS IN A DIRECTION WELCOME TO MOSCOW. IN ADDITION, THE BENIGN FACE THE SOVIETS HAVE TURNED WESTWARD HAS PROBABLY MADE IT EASIER FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNIST PARTIES OF FRANCE AND ITALY TO GAIN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AS POSSIBLE COALITION PARTNERS (THOUGH THIS MAY NOT BE WHAT THEY ARE TELLING MOSCOW). MOREOVER, THE WEST'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (WHILE NOT RELATED TO DETENTE) HAVE ADDED AN ECONOMIC
DIMENSION TO THE PICTURE OF A DYNAMIC SOCIALIST SYSTEM GAINING ON ITS AILING CAPITALIST RIVAL. FINALLY, THE MOVEMENT AT CSCE IN DECEMBER HAS PUT THE SOVIETS CLOSER TO THEIR GOAL OF A CSCE SUMMIT WHICH WOULD ELEVATE SOVIET PRESTIGE, CONFIRM THEIR CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE, AND FIGURATIVELY BESTOW ON MOSCOW--IN ITS OWN EYES--THE ROLE OF AN OFFICIAL ARBITER OF EUROPE'S DESTINY.

6. DESPITE THE BILATERAL HUMILIATIONS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT DURING 1974, THE SOVIET STRATEGY

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OF KEEPING CHINA NEUTRALIZED HAS WORKED SURPRISINGLY WELL. NO CAPITALIST COUNTRY HAS SCORED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN RELATIONS WITH THE PRC; IT IS JAPAN, WITH WHICH SOVIET DETENTE POLICY HAS PERHAPS WORKED LEAST WELL, WHICH HAS COME CLOSEST. MOREOVER, MOSCOW HAS PROGRESSED TOWARD THE SEMI-FINAL ROUND OF A SERIES OF COMMUNIST CONFERENCES BY WHICH IT HOPES TO ISOLATE PEKING FROM THE MOVEMENT. EVEN IF, AS IS LIKELY, THISYEAR'S EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE DOES NOT CONDEMN THE PRC (THE SOVIETS ARE STILL LEAVING THE OPTION OPEN), THE USSR WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO USE IT TO ASSERT ITS PRIMACY IN THE MOVEMENT. FINALLY, THE CHINA FACTOR STILL EXERCISES A POWERFUL DETERRENT TO SOVIET ABANDONMENT OF DETENTE: AS LONG AS MOSCOW AND PEKING ARE AT LOGGERHEADS, THE SOVIETS WILL NOT WANT TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH MAJOR PROBLEMS ON THEIR WEST AS WELL AS ON THEIR SOUTH.

7. THE FOURTH CATEGORY--THE ECONOMIC ONE--WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR FACTORS IN MOSCOW'S ORIGINAL TURN TO DETENTE, AND IN THE WAKE OF THE MFN/CREDITS TURNDOWN IT IS THE MOST VOLATILE. IN ANY CASE, 1974 WAS BY NO MEANS OVERALL A NEGATIVE YEAR FOR SOVIET CAPITALIST ECONOMIC COOPERATION. BOTH FRANCE AND THE FRG AGREED TO CONSOLIDATE A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR; TRADE WITH JAPAN GREW ABOUT 50 PERCENT TO ABOUT 2.5 BILLION DOLLARS; AND THERE WAS PROGRESS WITH THE U.S. SOVIET IMPORTS OF U.S. MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT CONTINUED TO GROW AND OVERALL TRADE CAME CLOSE TO THE $1 BILLION FIGURE. BUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DIMMING OF SOVIET HOPES FOR SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES --CAUSED NOT ONLY BY THE EMIGRATION CONDITIONS BUT ALSO BY PRESSURE IN THE U.S. FOR ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY--IS OBVIOUSLY OF ACUTE SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

8. DESPITE BRAVE SOVIET TALK OF THE "EUROPEAN OPTION," WE BELIEVE THAT THE USSR CONTINUES TO SEE THE U.S. AS A VITAL SOURCE OF THE TECHNOLOGY AND CREDITS THAT ITS DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS--WHICH IT MEASURES IN BILLIONS AND IN DECADES--WILL REQUIRE. WE THINK THE SOVIETS WOULD BE RELUCTANT AT THIS POINT TO DRAW THE SWEEPING CONCLUSION THAT THIS SOURCE IS NOT GOING TO BE AVAILABLE TO IT OVER THE LONG HAUL. THERE IS NO REASON YET FOR THEM TO CONSIDER THAT CONGRESS--WHOSE CHANGEABILITY THEY HAVE GOOD REASON TO KNOW--HAS UTTERED ITS FINAL WORD ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION. MOREOVER, THEIR STRENGTHENED ECONOMIC POSITION FROM OIL AND NATURAL GAS REVENUES NOT ONLY HELPED STIFFEN THEIR BACK AGAINST JACKSON-VANIK; IT HAS ALSO GIVEN THEM SOME BREATHING SPACE WHILE CONGRESS SORTS OUT ITS POLICIES. BUT IT HAS NOT SOLVED THEIR ULTIMATE PROBLEM. GIVEN THE SCALE OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE IN MIND, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY EXPECT THEIR PETRO-DOLLARS

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TO CARRY THEM THROUGH. IN ANY CASE, PETRO-DOLLARS ALONE
CANNOT ASSURE THEM THE U.S. TECHNOLOGY THEY NEED. THUS,
UNLESS CONGRESS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF
LAFGE-SCALE BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION ON A BASIS
MOSCOW CAN ACCEPT, WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS WILL ABANDON
HOPE OF SUCH COOPERATION. IF THE ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE WAS
STRONG ENOUGH A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO TO HELP PROPEL A CAUTIOUS
SOVIET REGIME INTO A FUNDAMENTAL POLICY SHIFT TOWARD THE
U.S., THEN IT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND A SETBACK OR
TWO BY THE U.S. CONGRESS.

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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9. WE WOULD NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT SOVIET FLEXIBILITY ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION MOST EMPHATICALLY DOES NOT INCLUDE FLEXIBILITY ON FORMAL LINKAGE BETWEEN TRADE AND EMIGRATION. THE SOVIET DECISION TO REJECT SUCH LINKAGE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN A CLOSE ONE, MADE AFTER GREAT INTERNAL DEBATE; BUT IT WAS A DECISION. AT THIS POINT WE CAN ENVISAGE NO CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH MOSCOW WOULD REVERSE IT, NO MATTER WHAT ECONOMIC INCENTIVES WERE USED TO SWEETEN THE POT.

10. LOOKING AT 1974 FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE SECURITY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OF ITS COMMUNIST SYSTEM, SOVIET POLICY-MAKERS CAN CONCLUDE THAT SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF DETENTE WERE REALIZED DURING THE YEAR WHILE NONE OF THE DANGERS CAME TO PASS. 1974 (UNLIKE 1973 OR 1972) WAS A YEAR IN WHICH THERE WERE NO SERIOUS THREATS OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR; IT WAS ALSO A YEAR, AS NOTED ABOVE, IN WHICH SOVIET STRATEGIC SECURITY WAS ENHANCED THROUGH FURTHER U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE USSR AS A NUCLEAR EQUAL. JUST AS IMPORTANT WERE THINGS THAT DID NOT HAPPEN. THE SOVIETS DID NOT SACRIFICE ANYTHING AT MBFR, AND--EVEN IF THEY OPT FOR A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION--ANY INITIAL AGREEMENT WILL BE SMALL-SCALE ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT THEY WILL NOT HAVE TO MAKE MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS. AT CSCE THEY PASSED THROUGH THE BASKET THREE CRUNCH IN DECEMBER WITHOUT CONCEDING ANYTHING ON HUMAN CONTACTS THAT WILL SERIOUSLY TIE THEM DOWN. AND THEIR REJECTION OF MFN LAID TO REST ANY DOMESTIC FEARS THAT THEY WILL BARGAIN AWAY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THEIR INTERNAL CONTROL MECHANISM FOR THE SAKE OF DETENTE.

11. PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, IN VIEW OF THE CRITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EASTERN EUROPE FOR SOVIET SECURITY, WAS THE FACT THAT DETENTE BREEZES DID NOT LOOSEN THE USSR'S CONTROL OVER ITS SATELLITES DURING THE YEAR. INDEED, POSSIBLY

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AIDED BY ITS OIL LEVERAGE, MOSCOW INDUCED AN IDEOLOGICAL
TIGHTENING-UP IN HUNGARY AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE. THERE WAS
NO PROBLEM KEEPING MOST OF THE TROOPS IN LINE AT CSCE
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AND MBFR. EVEN WITH ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA, BILATERAL
RELATIONS SEEMED STABILIZED IF NOT GREATLY IMPROVED---
A SITUATION WHICH NEITHER ROMANIAN CANTANKEROUSNESS IN CSCE
NOR THE HAM-HANDED MONTENEGRO AFFAIR SEEMS TO HAVE AFFECTED.
THE USSR, AIDED BY ITS DOMINANT ENERGY SUPPLY POSITION
AND GROWING HARD CURRENCY RESERVES, MADE FURTHER GAINS IN
ITS DESIRE TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN CEMA. MORE-
OVER, DETENTE DID NOT GREATLY AFFECT THE SOVIET POSITION
IN THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, THOUGH IT CAUSED SOME
PROBLEMS WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTIES.

12. IF, AS WE BELIEVE, THE 1974 BALANCE SHEET IS NOT SO
NEGATIVE AS TO WARRANT A REVERSAL OF THE SOVIET DETENTE
POLICY, THE PROSPECTS FOR 1975 SHOULD BE BETTER. ASSUMING
CSCE AND SALT STAY ON TRACK, THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE TWO
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS TO CITE IN JUSTIFICATION OF THEIR
PEACE POLICY. (AND, IF THEY CHOOSE, SOME ADDITIONAL FLEXI-
BILITY ON THEIR PART CAN MAKE MBFR WORK TO THIS END AS
WELL.) THEY ALSO HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL
EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE, WHICH WILL PROVE THAT
DETENTE HAS NOT IMPAIRED SOVIET HEGEMONY IN THE MOVEMENT.

13. IN SUM, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE TIDE IS RUNNING
AGAINST A CONTINUED SOVIET COMMITMENT TO DETENTE. BUT THE
SETBACK ON MFN/CREDITS IS A DANGER SIGNAL. NOT ONLY BECAUSE
IT IS A BLOW TO A MAJOR SOVIET ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE BUT ALSO
BECAUSE IT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO GROWING DOUBTS IN MOSCOW THAT
THE U.S. IS WILLING, OR PERHAPS EVEN ABLE, TO CARRY THROUGH
ON THE RELATIONSHIP PROCLAIMED AT THE 1972 SUMMIT. LACK
OF U.S. MOVEMENT ON ELIMINATING OBSTACLES TO THE ECONOMIC
RELATIONSHIP COULD ONLY STRENGTHEN SUCH DOUBTS. SO, ALSO,
COULD MOSCOW'S CONTINUED FREEZE-OUT FROM THE ME POLITICAL
PROCESS, A HITCH IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS, A U.S. FAILURE TO
WIN THE AGREEMENT OF ITS ALLIES ON A 1975 CSCE SUMMIT, OR
A FLARE-UP IN VIETNAM WHICH RETURNED IT TO THE ARENA OF
U.S.-SOVIET CONTENTION.

14. IF EVENTS DURING THE CURRENT YEAR WERE TO PERSUADE
THE SOVIETS THAT THE U.S. IS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF A FULL--
STRATEGIC, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL-- DETENTE RELATIONSHIP, WE
WOULD NOT EXCLUDE A SOVIET DECISION TO RETURN, HOWEVER
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RELUCTANTLY, TO A MORE LIMITED "DIVISIBLE DETENTE" RELATION-
SHIP WITH THE U.S. IN SUCH A CASE, THE SOVIET INTEREST
IN THE STRATEGIC ASPECT OF DETENTE WOULD CONTINUE, SINCE IT
RESPONDS TO REAL SOVIET SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND TO A
SOVIET NEED TO DIVERT RESOURCES FROM THE PRODUCTION OF
STRATEGIC WEAPONS. THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF DETENTE WOULD
LARGELY DEPEND ON US: THE SOVIETS WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE
WHAT THEY COULD GET BY WAY OF TRADE OR CREDITS SO LONG AS
NO POLITICAL STRINGS WERE ATTACHED. IT IS THE POLITICAL ASPECT
OF DETENTE IN WHICH U.S. INTERESTS WOULD MOST SUFFER. IF
MOSCOW CONCLUDED THAT THE U.S. COULD NO LONGER BE LOOKED
TO IN HELPING THE USSR ACHIEVE ITS MAJOR DETENTE OBJECTIVES,
THEN THE SOVIETS WOULD BE LESS INCLINED TO PURSUE NEGOTIA-
TIONS (E.G., MBFR) IN WHICH IT DOES NOT SEE A VITAL SOVIET
INTEREST, WOULD BE LESS RESTRAINED FROM MEDDLESOME POLICIES
IN WORLD TROUBLE SPOTS, AND WOULD BE LESS WILLING TO FACTOR
DETENTE CONSIDERATIONS INTO DECISIONS AFFECTING SOVIET
INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

15. GIVEN BREZHNEV'S STRONG PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION WITH
SOVIET DETENTE POLICY--AND HIS DESIRE TO USE IT AS HIS
TICKET TO A NICHE NEXT TO LENIN IN THE SOVIET PANTHEON--
HE WOULD OBVIOUSLY HOPE TO REPORT TO THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS
EARLY NEXT YEAR THAT DETENTE HAS BEEN A SUCCESS IN ALL ITS
ASPECTS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE WHOLE LEADERSHIP, FOR WHICH DETENTE IS
A COLLECTIVE POLICY, SHARES THAT HOPE. BUT EVEN BREZHNEV IS
NOT IMMUNE FROM MAKING POLICY SHIFTS IF EVENTS GO SOUR.
MOREOVER, HIS FALTERING HEALTH IS A COMPLICATING FACTOR
IN AT LEAST TWO RESPECTS. FIRST, HIS ENERGY AND POLITICAL
SKILLS WILL NOT BE AS READILY AVAILABLE TO PRESS HIS
POLICIES AND NEUTRALIZE DOUBTERS. SECOND, IF A STRUGGLE
FOR SUCCESSION DEVELOPS, PRETENDERS WILL BE LOOKING FOR
POLICY WEAKNESSES TO USE AS LEVERS TO POWER, AND THE CURRENT
CONSENSUS MIGHT DISINTEGRATE.

16. THUS, WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE A SOVIET POLICY REVISION
ON DETENTE WITH THE U.S. IS LIKELY, THERE IS A GREATER DANGER
THAN AT ANY POINT SINCE MAY 1972 THAT EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL
FACTORS COULD COMBINE TO UNDERCUT THE DEGREE OF SOVIET
COMMITMENT TO THE POLICY.
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